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clash between Eastern and Western Turk at Ankara, where Timur defeated the Ottoman Bayezid in 1402, had small significance. He returned to die three years later at Otrar on the Sir Darya, while the Ottomans, girding up their loins, half a century later finally shattered the Byzantines by storming Constantinople, and went on to thunder at the gates of Vienna. Yet it is rightly said that Timur left a heritage, greater than that of a warrior. It is enough to name his grandson Ulugh Beg, builder, scientist and astronomer; the Timurid the Sultan Hussain Baikara (1438–1506), with his splendid city at Herat and the great literature fostered there by the poet Alishir Nevai; Hussain's cousin that other Timurid, Babur (1482–1530), author of the Memoirs and founder of the Chaghatai Empire in Hindustan. All these men were Turks self-confessed, they thought and spoke and wrote in the Eastern Turkic language called by the Mongol name Chaghatai. The annals of this house were rendered illustrious by the names of poets, philosophers and theologians, still household words throughout the East.[1]

It was a glorious flowering. There is need to live in Muslim lands in order to understand how close are the deeds and words of the men of the classic age to the minds of men today, closer in some strange way than are the Elizabethans to us. The reason for this nearness may be found perhaps in the fact that deeds and words in the East have been handed on so much by word of mouth, and a man will speak of forebears who lived centuries ago as if he had known them as a child. Thus the flowering of the Timurid age is to the Eastern Turks what the Elizabethans are to us, and more: it was a positive achievement for all time which cannot be annulled, a guarantee which later men may strive to redeem. To those who are lost it still provides a rallying-point.

(iv) *Period of Dissolution*

Much of the first part of Babur's Memoirs is occupied with stirring accounts of his struggles against Shaibak or Shaibani

[1] Cf. Bāb. I, 22, p. 180.

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175 from its mouth, and in the following year a Russian expedition penetrated into the Ili Valley. The Crimean War then arrested progress, but by 1863 the line had reached Chimkent and the northern oases, and included parts of the Tienshan and Lake Issik Köl.

175 538 829 These advances on the Kazak steppe and into the mountains had not been achieved without a struggle. A strenuous resistance was put up by the Kazak Khan, Kine Sari, whose name is celebrated in many a ballad as the hero of these tribes. He was the grandson of the famous Abilay Khan, who late in the XVIIIth century had succeeded in delaying the Russian advance by means of a diplomatic alliance with China. Abilay's grave is beside that of Ahmed Yesevi in the shrine built by Timur at Yese, and his name has been eclipsed in Kazak story only by that of Kine Sari, his descendant. Kine Sari is to the Kazaks what the hero Shamil was to the people of the North Caucasus in their fifty years' struggle against Russian penetration ending in 1860. Until recently the Soviets looked favourably on the ballads and chronicles which extol the glory of these chieftains, but for the last few years the word has gone forth that literature of this kind is the worst form of bourgeois-nationalism. The Academies are forbidden to exalt writers who seek to hallow men who were nothing but feudal brigands engaged in a selfish warfare for their own pockets, a warfare directed not only against their big Russian brother but against the true interests of their own people. The Soviet press, central and local, is full of fulminations against the glorification of the misguided bandits who in the name of a petty tribalism resisted what is represented as the inevitable absorption of their country in a higher culture.

Kine Sari's period of renown lasted for the decade 1837 to 1846. His resistance was based on tribal fastnesses set up in the recesses of the Kara Tav and the northern part of the Ulu Tav, and for a while he maintained his position against the Russians as far west as the Ural River. In the end he fell in fratricidal strife with the Kirghiz of the Issik Köl region. He is famous for his exchange of words with the envoy sent

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by Beymembet, a Kazak who had gone over to the Russians and came to him with proposals for an armistice. In his letter Beymembet had written — Can the horned ram, head of a great herd though he be, overcome the lion? The end of rebellion is evil. Kine Sari quietly read the letter, turned to the envoy, and replied — He who sets a trap awry leaves his manhood in it. Is it not better to die in battle or upon the wastes of the steppe than face dishonour and be a slave?[1]

Even the Kirghiz who later slew him, and the Sarts of Tashkent who took him prisoner and murdered his father Kasim, revere Kine Sari as the national hero of all Turkistan. His death at the hands of the Kirghiz shows well enough how futile in action was this inchoate tribal resistance to the Russian advance. But that his name lives on today in the peoples' hearts is clear from the childish iterations of a Russian propaganda that never ceases to condemn his legend as a shameful survival from an unregenerate age.

The Russian Chancelleries felt that these successive advances, culminating in the capture of Chimkent, needed some justification before world opinion. This was provided in the well-known memorandum of the Tsar's Chancellor, Prince Gorchakov, addressed in 1864 to the governments of the States with which Russia was in diplomatic relations. The substance of this memorandum is clear from the following citation:

> The position of Russia in Central Asia is that of all civilized states which come into contact with half-savage wandering tribes possessing no fixed social organization. It invariably happens in such cases that the interests of security on the frontier, and of commercial relations, compel the more civilized state to exercise a certain ascendancy over neighbours whose turbulence and nomad instincts render them difficult to live with.

Having so stated the problem in general terms, Gorchakov went on to claim that the solution had been found by moving the frontier beyond the nomads to locate it in a fertile country with a sedentary population. In this way he justified the

[1] Togan, *op. cit.* p. 314.

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men who live the open life of the wanderer in the desert. It is perhaps the very simplicity of this nomadic attitude which makes the nomad impervious to an indoctrination with ideas which easily permeate more recondite minds. Thus in part we can explain the original resistance of the Turk to the winds of new doctrine. On this showing there is little need for surprise that those two parts of Asia, China and Turkistan, should have reacted differently to the Marxist-Leninist appeal.

But before it is possible to arrive at any demonstrable conclusion on the strength of traditional belief and observance in the face of Communist indoctrination, it is necessary to see whether there exists in the minds and thoughts of the people of Soviet Central Asia any monument, *aere perennius*, strong enough to stand up to the corrosive influences of time and adverse weather. This monument must be looked for in the existence of a continuing literature, without which any civilization, however grand its arts or its architecture in the past, will be hard put to it to live on into the present. It must not only be built of durable material but must be developed and restored to meet the changes and chances of the age, and so buttressed as to resist successfully even the shock of an earthquake. Can such a literature be found in Turkistan? And, if so, in what does its strength consist, how far is it up to date and what is the quality of the forces which seek to overthrow it?

538 Leaving aside for the moment the sacred books of Islam — and let no man underrate the effect of these in bestowing on man a certain firmness of spirit possibly stronger than with other faiths — there is the limited but undoubtedly great literature of the Timurid age written in the Chaghatai language. Its great representatives are the Emperor Babur in prose, and Mir Ali Shir Nevayi in poetry. Babur is the prince of autobiographers. Boon companion, warrior in single combat and in command of armies, man of letters, lover of nature and all beautiful things, a sinner grand enough to confess and make good his repentance, free of all cant, bearing no malice, frank, honourable, born a prince and in the end

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the founder of an empire, he sets to the Eastern Turks, from whose ranks he came, a pattern of manhood and simplicity such as no one Elizabethan can show to us. Whether he deals in battle or statecraft, in the love of nature or the kindness of friends, in the good-fellowship of a carouse or in resolutions (which he kept) to break his goblets and abstain from wine, in wise and humorous counsel to a son or the mature appraisement of good verse, in the littleness of man or the supreme efficacy of prayer, in all things, Babur has a quite inimitable charm. Combining as he does in one person so great a versatility, and passing, as only he knows how, from the extremes of ill-fortune to the summit of glory, he keeps to the end and unspoiled his grand simplicity. He was a very king of men.

Among many treasures in the *Baburnama*[1] is one, seldom quoted, but in many ways revealing of the man he was. It is a letter to his son Humayun, written after long separation:

To Humayun, whom I remember with much longing to see again, health.

Thanks be to God, who has given you a child, a child to you and to me a comfort and an object to love. . . . You have called him Al Aman [mercy, peace]; may the Almighty prosper him.

This is the season for you to expose yourself to danger and hardship, to exert your prowess. Fail not to meet strenuously every situation as it arises; for indolence and ease go ill with kingship. . . . Remember too always to act handsomely by your brother. The great should exercise self-command; and I do hope that you will always keep good understanding with him. He on his part is a correct and worthy youth, and will be careful to maintain the fidelity due to you.

In many of your letters you complain of separation from your friends. It is wrong for a prince to indulge in such a complaint, for as Saadi says:

If thy foot be fettered, choose to ride resigned,
If thou ride alone, take the course of thine own fancy.

There is no greater bondage than that in which a king is placed,

[1] Babur's memoirs have been translated into English twice — (*a*) by Erskine and Leyden in 1826, (*b*) by Mrs. Beveridge in 1922 (Bib. I, 12 and 61).

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538 and it becomes him not to complain of partings.

As I bade, you have indeed written to me, but certainly never read your letters over before despatch. Had you done so, you would have put them by. I did indeed manage, though with much difficulty, to decipher the meaning of your last letter, but the style is crabbed and even the spelling is not right. . . . Letter-writing is not your strong point, and this because you are too anxious to show off your acquirements. Pray write unaffectedly, with clearness, using plain words, such as cost less trouble both to writer and reader.

Waste no time in private parties, but, if you desire my approbation, indulge in liberal talk and frank intercourse with all about you. Attempt always the utmost courtesy of manners. . . . Forget not to pay attention to the state and discipline of the army.

Once more I salute you and long to see you.

Of Babur's literary style Mrs. Beveridge, one of his translators, writes that it is terse, word-thrifty, restrained and lucid, and that it comes over neatly into English, perhaps through primal affinities. 'It is neither regal nor self-magnifying but co-operative, as beseems the chief whose volunteer and nomad following makes or unmakes his power, and who can lead and command only by remittent consent accorded to him.' And Erskine, his earlier translator, said of Babur that, if we change but the circumstances, we might imagine we were among the Knights of Froissart. This, and the simplicity of his language, he owed to his being a Turk. That style which wraps up worthless meaning in a mist of words, and the etiquette which annihilates the courtier in the presence of his prince, were still, fortunately for Babur, foreign to the Turkish race. He was a great exemplar, to be remembered by those who are today subjected to the turns and twists of the new jargon.

Babur died at Agra in 1530, aged only forty-eight. A generation older, Mir Ali Shir Nevayi, the master of Chaghatai verse as Babur was of narrative prose, was born in Herat in 1441 and died there in 1501. He was the most esteemed subject of Babur's Timurid cousin, Hussain Baikara, at whose court he is represented as not only a Maecenas of letters and

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the arts, but a great poet in his own name both in his native Chaghatai and in Persian. Sometimes charged with being only a neat translator of Persian into Chaghatai, Nevayi has won the approbation of many recent critics as the creator of an original school of Eastern Turkish poetry instinct with its own peculiar inspirations and responsive to the tastes of the time.[1] Fuad Köprülü, now Foreign Minister of Turkey, has claimed greatness for Nevayi on the ground that his poetry was inspired not only by a real and tolerant faith but by an embracing patriotism. He was also the first among the Eastern Turks to crystallize a Turkic language and *esprit* in words which were not slavish copies of the Persian. But better than all of these is the testimony of Babur himself, Nevayi's junior by some forty years.

Ali Shir Beg [he writes] was celebrated for the elegance of his manners, and this elegance and polish were ascribed to the conscious pride of high fortune; but this was not the case — they were natural to him, and he had precisely the same manner when he was in misfortune in Samarkand. Indeed Ali Shir Beg was an incomparable person. From the time that poetry was first written in the Turkish[2] language, no man has written so much and so well. Some of his Persian verses are not bad, but the greater part are heavy and poor. He has also left excellent pieces of music, excellent both as to the airs themselves and as to the preludes. There is not upon record in history any man who was a greater patron and protector of men of talent than Ali Shir Beg. He had no son, nor daughter, nor wife, nor family. He passed through the world single and unencumbered, and in the end, victim of a sudden stroke, he departed to the Mercy of God.

Ali Shir adapted the *mesnevi* (rhymed couplet) to Turkic verse and, apart from his own poetry, he introduced to the Turks the *Teẓkere*, or biography, in the form of a *Lives of the Poets* (*Mejalis-un-nefais*).[3] But, unlike Dr. Johnson, he was

[1] Cf. Haidar Bammate (Bib. I, 6), pp. 424-30. This writer also cites MM. Berthels and Barthold, Russian savants, in support of his views. Incidentally, at this moment Nevayi is enjoying a Soviet vogue, but Soviet approbation is fickle.

[2] *Turki* (ترکی) in the original, as then generally used for the language and other Turkish or Turkic attributes, without the circumscription of modern thought.

[3] The Arabic words literally convey the idea of a symposium of elegant people.

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538 at the centre of things and had no cause to be troubled or cast down. To him and to Jami, the illustrious Persian and Nevayi's colleague at the Herat court, Gibb [1] gives honour as the twin suns in the east, by whose warmth West-Turkish Ottoman poetry was kindled into light.

> By the middle of the XVth century [writes Gibb] there was nothing wanting but the man of destiny, the man who by stammering, if not by singing, was to inaugurate the literature of the Osmanic Empire and become the van-courier of Ottoman poets. The voice of the age cried aloud for a leader, and in response arose Ahmed Pasha. Vaguely conscious of an ideal which he could not clearly conceive, Ahmed was stumbling along his way when, lo, out of the East came light, the light for which he and all his fellows were straining with eager gaze. When the *ghaqels* sent by Nevayi to Constantinople came into the hands of Ahmed, his eyes were opened; he saw before him embodied in a form, fairer than which he could not picture, these very moods and fantasies which he and his companions had been vainly striving to express.

Ali Shir Nevayi, like Babur, was an Eastern Turk of Turkistan, and Herat under the Timurids was a Turkish city where the Turkic and Persian cults met. It was Nevayi's poetry, which for a century and more after Ahmed, was the main source of inspiration of all the Ottoman lyric writers. In this way the Eastern Turks not only gave the ancestors of the men who carved out the Western Turkish empires, but added those currents of song and poesy which can be traced in Turkish poetry even today.

198 538 It was a bequest of which the Eastern Turks may well be proud. But Chaghatai as a medium had its limitations. It was in essence a literary language of the court and, although many have claimed for it that at one time it had in the East the same currency as literary Osmanli had in the West, it was deeply impregnated with Arabic and Persian extravagances and therefore not well adapted to become the medium of business and cultural relations. Moreover, so strong was Persian influence in Transoxiana that it became the habit of the Khivan and Bukharan courts in the Uzbek period to use Persian as the official language for administration and the law.

[1] Bib. I, 32.

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objective designed to promote a union of thought over a wider than parochial field, any effort of this kind deserves respect. If it is to have any prospect of success, it must be based on a living literature, good enough and strong enough to drive inferior coin out of currency. It may be that Babur and Nevayi supply the prose and verse foundations on which such literature can successfully be built up. Both stand for a period of splendour in the history of the Eastern Turks, both are widely read in all Turkish lands, and the renown of one, Babur, has spread far beyond the limits of Turkdom.

538 It is unfortunate that Chaghatai literature is of relatively narrow scope. One reason may well be sought in the lamentable destruction of the famous library burned by the Soviet armies at the taking of Bukhara in 1920. Apart from the contents of that library, now lost to us as irretrievably as Alexandria, there are probably many manuscripts collected in the libraries of Russian Academies of Sciences in the five republics, but, even if so, they are not much use to Western scholars. Moreover, although at one time the study of the literatures of the Eastern Turks was most diligently pursued under Soviet auspices, the tendency is now all the other way. It is even difficult now to obtain outside Russia the works of Eastern Turk poets in the original, and translations into Russian are the vogue. Almost one might be persuaded that these are Russian poets!

The Chaghatai literature was the sophisticated product of the settled oases of the south. Not unexpectedly we find the familiar distinction between the sedentary population of the cities and the men of the steppe carried through into their several literatures. The Kazak, Turkmen and Kirghiz traditions — the spirit of Abilay and Kine Sari Khan — were expressed in a fine literature of ballads (*dastan*) and epic minstrel poetry, handed down originally by word of mouth and later, often at the suggestion of earlier Russian admirers, reduced to writing. Such were the *Köroghlu*, the *Dede Korkut*

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(or *Korkut Ata*) of the Turkmens and Azeris, the *Edige batir* and the *Kublandi-batir* (*batir* means hero)[1] of the Kazaks, the *Alpamish* of the Uzbeks, the *Manas* epics of the Kirghiz. 538

But here again, with the exception of the Kirghiz Manas transcribed by Radloff,[2] these poems are for the most part inaccessible in the original tongue. Many examples of Central Asian verse will be found cited in a recent English book on the epos, but the distinguished author[3] has to confess having had to work entirely on Russian translations without access to any original texts. In fact, outside Soviet Academies, these texts are just not to be obtained, if only for the reason that the minstrels sang of heroes of the resistance, and their original work is therefore banned as tainted with 'survivalism'. On the other hand, versions of this literature, carefully edited and expurgated, are to be had in Russian translation, and must be read, even in Central Asia, in Russian.

The Russians perhaps forget that poetry of this kind is in the oral tradition, learned at the mother's knee or in the congregations of the young men. It does not depend on texts for its survival. One of the merits of Togan's writing is that he is able to hand on passages in the Turkic from some of these poems. The examples I quote are taken from his book, inadequately rendered into English.

In all these stories the hero stands four-square in the line of Eastern chivalry. He glories in his countryside and his tribe,[4] he venerates old age, he is a paragon of manly beauty and bravery, he is loyal in his love, above all his military honour is beyond reproach. The wife or beloved of the hero is endowed with equal womanly virtues: as courageous as her lover, she may surpass him in wit and intuition, and she is his equal. During the XVIIIth and XIXth centuries a more lyrical line of minstrelsy, originally handed down from bard to bard, was reduced to writing by such poets as Yirav, Nisembay Akin, Abay[5] and Maghjan Jumabay, and was expressed in a series

[1] Bib. II, 7, Dr. Wiener. [2] Bib. I, 78. [3] Bib. I, 14, Sir M. Bowra.
[4] Cf. the Pathan proverb: *Har cha tah khpal mulk Kashmir dai* — 'Unto every man his own land is Kashmir'. [5] Bib. III, 1.

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538 of national poems directed against the Russian expansion. This expression of a renewed nationalism grew directly out of the epic tradition, with its stress on the valour of the warriors who defended their people at all costs. In these epics and lyrics the horse and the herds form a part of the family life of the hero; indeed the horse himself, the hero's nearest companion, is as splendid as the horses in the Psalms. We are reminded of the horse Rakhsh, nuzzling the dying Sohrab in Matthew Arnold's classic poem.

The name of Kine Sari has been celebrated in Kazak poetry ever since he fell in fratricidal battle with the Kirghiz chiefs near Issik Köl. He became the symbol of Kazak national pride, and even the Kirghiz, who slew him, regard him as the hero of all Turkistan. His death is the subject of a poem by Nisembay:

He was a man, strong in heart and body,
As though he had been born in armour,
Fate, that favoured him,
Girt him about the loins with a sword;
When he saw the foe in battle, he shouted 'Abilay'
And chased them from the field;
He chose his horse from the wild horses,
And fed him, as he rode, from the bag,
Or gave him honey for fodder
And the milk of a barren mare. . . .

Togan has a moving account of some of the poetry and prose writers of the Eastern Turks since the Russian occupation. While he emphasizes the conflict of soul which gave them unrest, he is generous enough to recognize the debt they owed to the inspirations of Russian liberalism under the Tsars, and brings this out prominently in his accounts of Abay and Ismail Gaspirali. The following selections give an idea of the tradition of the more prominent writers since the Russian conquest.

Abay (1845–1906), Kazak poet

He was born in the Chingiz Tav in Yedisu. About 1880 he came into contact with Russian literature through a

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Russian revolutionary named Mikhailis, who introduced him 538
to the works of Pushkin, Tolstoy, and more particularly Lermontov 'with his model Byron'. He combined with this the Persian strain of the centenarian Saadi and the Turkic strain of Nevayi.

He was a poet of the steppe, describing nomadic life in a series of beautiful lyrics, written in such simple language that even the herdsmen could take in his philosophic ideas. Or so they thought: Abay himself in one of his best-known poems, grieved that the Kazaks could not follow him.

The footman is left behind, the horsemen ride on,
Who of them will turn aside to listen to my plaint?

Abay created a society for himself, described as an Islamic milieu, loving Russian literature, and knowing the intellectual life of Russia. His poems are current in the Russia of today, but in Russian translation, not in the original Kazak.

Chokan Velikhan

Chokan was born about 1837 and died of consumption in 1865.

He too was a Kazak and a descendant of Chingiz in the Kazak nomadic tradition. His career is described as a national tragedy in that he was a great admirer of Russian liberalism and Western inspirations, but in the end suffered grievous disillusionment. He started by trying to cleanse the Turkish tradition from its accretions, brought by the priesthood and feudalism, and to attune it to a new synthesis with what he saw to admire in Russia. He graduated at the Russian War Academy and was a friend of Dostoievsky. But he was betrayed and his ideals broken in pieces. Throughout his life he followed his star; as long as he believed in Russia, he spoke out in friendship. Later he expressed his hatred, having seen a Russian bayonet a Kazak woman on the march. Exclaiming 'This land is the land of my fathers: I cannot bear it', he threw off his uniform, and withdrew to the steppe, where he died.

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538 For him the Turkish epics were a source of inspiration. He was the first to study the Kirghiz Manas epic, and to transcribe parts of it into literary Turkish. He believed that the nomad Turks, even if they sat lightly to Islam, had in them a civilization strong enough to prevent them being sacrificed to any foreign machinations whatever. Though he admired the new Russian XIXth-century humanism, he had no opinion of the political aims behind the Orthodox Church. His great contribution was to make known the ballads of the famous singers, as a possession for ever for those who loved the old Turkish nomadic tradition of the mountain and the steppe.

Ismail Gaspirali (1851–1914)

Gaspirali was a Crimean, and only a few years younger than Chokan. He was taken up as a promising young Turk, and went through the Russian War Academy, where he was influenced by the liberalism of the middle XIXth century. His life's work was to appeal to the Russians in a spirit of brotherly loving-kindness to forsake policies of assimilation, while attracting the Turks to what was good in Russian civilization. He also planned the creation of a literary language which should be common to all Turks. In him perhaps are to be found the first stirrings of the spirit which spread abroad, and became known to all the world, in the speeches and actions of Mustafa Kemal. Gaspirali's idea was that of the renewal and purification of the Ottoman language by means of currents from farther east. It is curious to note the emphasis which all these Turks, and Russians too, place on language as a social, cultural, economic and political counter, and to reflect how far removed is this attitude from that of the protagonists of a united Europe. Using language as a symbol, Gaspirali dreamed of a cultural Turkish unity which should transcend all differences and even lead to a larger association of idea.

The conflicts of soul that tore at patriots such as Gaspirali is described in a moving passage by Togan. He writes:

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I came across Gaspirali's book in the home of Ebubekir Agha, 538
in Russian service. I remember saying to him that Ismail Bey (Gaspirali) had been too servile: the Russians had abolished slavery, but introduced a new slavery in its place. It was dangerous for us to encourage the Russians to approach us in the guise of a big brother, creep into our hearts, give us decorations and uniforms, make love to us in order to betray us. It was better for the future of the colonial peoples to refrain from close mingling, as the English did. Ebubekir replied — 'The ideas of that period were rather different; moreover, had Ismail Bey said that, his book would never have passed the censorship. In the bad times he brought us at least some comfort,' and, smiling sweetly, he played on his harmonium some old Bashkurd melodies, more beautifully than I could have imagined. His own eyes, and the eyes of his wife, filled with tears.[1]

Maghjan Jumabay

He was a Kazak national poet, born in 1894 in Yedisu, east of Balkhash. His collected poems were published in Tashkent in 1923, but the collection is incomplete, for many were too patriotic to pass the censors. Here are some quotations; even a distillation through more than one language does not entirely destroy the inspiration of the original, and they have the stir of genuine poetry.

The Sacred Issik Köl, on which the first Turk,
Born of the grey wolf, saw the light of the world;
The two rivers Jaihun and Saihun,
And between them the holy graves of thine ancestors;
The great mountains of Turan, Khan Tenri reaching to heaven —
Look now to the mountains and think how the Turks suffer in bondage!

And again:

Aksak [lame] Timur, who set the world afire,
Sent forth a beam like a lightning-flash.
Tanri, the God in heaven, has no descent,
But Timur's descendants, the Gods on earth,
Are the Turks, and their sign is fire.

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 556.

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538 And in a poem addressed to Turkey at the end of World War I:

My brother, far away, so greatly suffering,
My brother, like a tulip broken,
Is not Altai our common mother?
Have we not played on her slopes,
Did not the cool mountain springs
Splash for us, run for us through the rocks,
Were not our horses the wild steeds,
Running like the whirlwind?
In the golden days thou didst part from me
And go to the Middle and Black Seas.
But I remained like a bird,
Spreading not my wings,
And none was left to show me the way.
The enemy's bullet struck my heart and I sank down:
I was thrust into a dark prison and shut in.
And thou, O Master?
Have we Turks lost the heart of the lion,
Become cowards and weary of war?
Is the fire in our hearts put out?
And our fathers' blood dried up?
Oh brother, thou there, and I here,
Both in dire distress.
Come, let us go again to the Altai,
And mount the golden throne of our fathers.

And addressing God:

Thou gavest to every land, to the poor Arabia,
Nurse of camels,
A Prophet to show the way
And a holy Book,
But to us Turks this grace thou hast not vouchsafed.
We have followed prophets from divers lands,
And set our faith in holy words,
But the way has not been shown us.
Send us a prophet to show us that way.

The renascence of Turkey under Atatürk — has it been the answer to this prayer?

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Cholpan

He was an Uzbek, whose real name was Abdul Hamid 538
Suleiman. He was born in 1897 in Andijan, where (as the Emperor Babur said more than 400 years ago) the literary language of Alishir Nevayi is at its best. He graduated in an Islamic school, learned Russian, and studied in Moscow. Until 1926 he wrote in the national spirit, choosing as his patterns the older poets, particularly Alishir Nevayi. He also translated from the Russian, and from the Indian poet Tagore. After 1926 he and Maghjan were exposed to much persecution and forced to write to order. They evolved a kind of poetic cypher system, Maghjan using the words *Kun men tun* (day and night) when referring to Turks and Russians, and Cholpan *east and west*, referring to the oppressed and the tyrants. Many of his earlier poems are now very difficult to come by, but the following are quotations:

He is the enemy who knows not
The limit of his going,
Who hides what lies
To his right and to his left.
It may be that all must bow before the tyrant,
But if the tyrant oversteps the mark,
It may be that the heavens will come down to earth.

Such poems as these are described by Russian commentators as works of the period when the poet was caught up in the stream of nationalism, and they have disappeared from print. But they are preserved like the ballads of old in the souls of Turks who were persecuted or forced to leave Russia.

The languages in which these poems are written, Uzbek and Kazak, are for all practical purposes a closed book to Western students, and, until such time as it becomes possible to read them in the original, it is not easy to appraise their value. But for us the question is this. How enduring is this literature, starting with Ali Shir Nevayi and ending with Cholpan? What does it represent? We shall be in a better position to answer after seeing what the Soviets think in the matter.

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Anglo-American 'intervention' in the 1919–20 period. Even the American intervention, claiming to be economic, could not be dissociated from the political plans of the militarists and revealed the bestial character of the American imperialists, no disinterested benefactors as was Great Russia. Thus historians, philosophers, economists and literary scholars, all alike, must in their works display the influence of the Great Russian people in the formation of social thought in Asia. Their works must be permeated with the Bolshevik Party spirit and give a Marxist-Leninist interpretation of the past. At the base of every thought must be the treatises of Stalin on questions such as linguistics. These will give them a correct understanding of the historical process.

It follows that resistance to the Russian conquest is no longer to be seen as a splendid, though unsuccessful, enterprise. Henceforth poetry or prose works extolling as national heroes the men of Turkish stock who had struggled against the establishment of the Russian imperium, must no longer be included in histories or anthologies, or be quoted with approval. Such actions are futile resistance by a lesser breed to an inevitable absorption in a larger whole by dialectical historical process working through the Russian people; that absorption, even if it pre-dated the Revolution, was, as it were, the shadow of what was to come. Those who presume to praise the 'heroes' of the resistance are guilty of ideological distortion, bourgeois-nationalism, patriarchal feudal survivalism, and so on.

This condemnation extends to specific works. The *Kublandi-batir*, for instance, is no longer a paean of national virtue and valour, but low patter, extolling violence and brigandage. It is steeped in the poison of hatred for other peoples, in reactionary Muslim ideology and ideas of pan-Islam. A local savant is taken to task for presuming to assert that this poem is in content near to our own times, having as its basic idea patriotism and the love of the people. Only a bourgeois-nationalist could thus appraise a poem extolling cruelty and brigandage. All views of this kind must be

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expunged from syllabuses and text-books. The various versions of the Uzbek *Alpamish* epic are as bad, and have not been saved by their translation into Russian. They are not people's epics but Khan's epics. When an Uzbek panegyrist praises them as symbols of all that is heroic and noble in the conceptions of the Uzbeks, he slanders the Uzbek working people by ascribing to them the desires and ideals of the Khans. As a folk-lore expert he should correct his views by reference to the teachings of the classics of Marxism/Leninism. Other objectionable poems are the so-called *Korkut Ata* or *Dede Korkut* epics. Certain Turkmen savants have been shameless enough to plagiarize what is in origin an epic of Azerbaijan. But that is not all. The epic itself is an idealization of the feudal system, conceals the class-struggle, and reveals a non-Marxist attitude to the heritage of the past. It is symbolic of the tendency of nationalism to retire within the confines of a national frontier, refusing to see that which binds the workers of all nationalities of the Soviet Union. The task is to strengthen the struggle against the smallest manifestations of bourgeois-nationalism, against glorification of an outdated culture, against every capitalist survival to be met with in the Asiatic parts of the Union. Yet Uzbeks, Kazaks and Turkmens persist in abstract praises of their 'motherlands'. One Turkmen even had the insolence to write a poem 'My Turkmenistan', and another a lyric entitled 'Thou Turkmen'. Both poems merely isolate the Turkmen artificially, representing only themselves as excelling in valour. It is their contribution to the great assemblage of Soviet peoples that must be stressed. No more bards with a religious-nationalistic ideology, praising Khans and priests, can be allowed.

In their place there has grown up an obsequious literature, best represented by the Kazak laureate Jambul (1846–1945). Like Saadi in one respect alone — he was almost a centenarian —, he has given his name, if only for a season, to the old town of Aulie Ata, near Chimkent. He is the author of poems extolling the Soviet high-priests and the banners of the Red

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186 Army, which he sees as pointing the way into a world where
538 man can at last realize his destiny. Not for him the old,
626 unhappy, far-off things.

In Jambul's company this ideological war is then carried on to the ground of individual figures in history, and Kine Sari Khan the son of Kasim, the Kazak leader, comes in for special castigation. Historians are taken to task for publicizing in their works the reactionary-monarchist movement of 'K. Kasymov, the robber Khan'. Kine Sari was a reactionary and no defender of the people. Such defects can only be due to neglect of Bolshevik criticism in the literary circles of Kazakistan. Historians and students alike must turn over a new leaf and cease to idealize brigands such as Kine Sari, Abilay and Nauruzbai. Artists and writers do not seem to realize the immense political changes which have taken place as a result of the carrying-out of the Lenin/Stalin national policy, and frequently take delight in an old and outworn past. They must not describe backward individuals as typical representatives of contemporary Soviet life. They must forswear literature of a formalist and cosmopolitan colour; that way lies pan-Turkism, pan-Iranism and pan-Islamism.

186 Music and the arts do not escape. In Kazakistan musical
533 science is backward and on the wrong lines. The national
626 handbook of music is full of gross errors and idealizes a feudal past, regretting lost freedom. This is bourgeois-nationalism at its worst. Kazak musicians even dare to refer all musical achievement in the republic to the pre-revolutionary period, and to express such views publicly. In Uzbekistan the development of musical culture is far behind the economic, political and cultural growth of the republic — note the order — and does not meet the demands prescribed by the Party to the musical art, as a powerful means of Communist education of the workers. The minds of sculptors are low; they
186 532 626 do not deal with the heroic labour of the people in the production of oil and cotton. One artist presumed to say his pictures would be appreciated in ten years' time: an anticipation of the future is as bad as a delight in the past, for it

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is the duty of Soviet man to glory in the achievements of contemporary life.

There is some unconscious humour. There is the outrageous instance of a worker who, though a member of an anti-God league, was found with his Comsomol ticket in one pocket and his religious charm in the other. Too few, we are told, are worried by the fact that there are not enough girls in Comsomols; a massed attack must be made on the girls in the collective farms and an ideological-creative spirit must be displayed by the youth. The Deputy Chairman has even been seen going to the cinema, while his wife, suppressed by his bourgeois-nationalist outlook, remains at home to mind the children. Stalin wants no more decadent verses with descriptions of heroes and their horses and cattle, no more delight in the beauties of nature, no more sob-stuff about roses, nightingales and lovely maidens — and certainly not erotic poetry —, no more pictures of aged greybeards who close their eyes to pray and waste time on the job. All these are foreign to the aesthetic tastes of the Soviet people. The heroic labour of miners, metal-workers, cotton-growers and engineers — these are the true themes for contemporary literature and the arts. And, chiefly, let all remember their big Russian brother, without thought to spare for a separate world and a tradition dead and gone.

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This picture is not overpainted; it can be seen in its full colours by any casual visitor to the Stalinist public gallery. It is not imaginary to suppose that this unrelenting effort is prompted by a certain unease. Here in Central Asia is an exposed flank, the source of raw materials vital to the survival of the Empire, the home of peoples whose memories of their own civilization make them probably the least assimilable of all elements in the Union. At any cost then, in this quarter above all, it is necessary to suppress every tendency towards a separate national consciousness. The question to be asked is this — how far has this unceasing stream of exhortation and

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ward from the border of Turkestan almost to the Volga. The Kara Kirghiz, who number about 540,000 in all, are native to Turkestan. Most of them live on the inclement slopes of the Tien Shan Mountains.

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The differences in the character of these two Kirghiz tribes find expression in many details. The itinerant minstrels who wander from camp to camp of the Kara Kirghiz recite for the most part epic poems of heroic character, in which the glorious past and the great men of bygone days are praised. On the other hand the poetry of the Kirghiz Kasaks, who range the wide plains, consists mainly of romantic lays and love songs.

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In spite of these differences both are hardy nomad peoples, insensible to heat and cold, hunger and thirst. They have retained the Turco-Mongol type comparatively purely, and are of sturdy build. Their obliquely set eyes, high cheek-bones, and sparse growth of beard proclaim them as genuine Mongols. The well-known Mongolian spot (a blue blotch on the skin of the lower part of the back) has been observed in their children up to the age of two years.

The Turkomans number about 700,000 in all, they roam the western part of the country between the Persian frontier and the Aral Sea. The finest types are found among the Tekke Turkomans, a group comprising